

IN THE MATTER OF : NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE CERTIFICATES OF : STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
DEANDRA L. BROWN-PALMER : ORDER OF REVOCATION
_____ : DOCKET NO: 2526-146

At its meeting of January 22, 2026, the State Board of Examiners (Board) reviewed information from the Department of Education (DOE) – Office of Student Protection (OSP) and the DOE – Office of Legal Affairs, Accountability and Compliance (OLAAC) regarding Deandra L. Brown-Palmer, including documents obtained from the Salem County Prosecutor’s Office (SCPO) and Elmer Police Department (EPD). Brown-Palmer currently holds an Instructional Substitute credential, expiring August 30, 2028.

On or about July 2, 2024, Brown-Palmer was charged with Eluding (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:29-2B. Subsequently, on or about July 3, 2024, Brown-Plamer was charged with Knowingly Leaving the Scene of a Fatal Accident (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5.1; Endangering the Welfare of a Child (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:24-4A(2); and Death by Auto (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A. It is alleged that, on or about July 2, 2024, Brown-Palmer struck and killed a bicyclist while driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. It is also alleged that he fled the scene of the accident without stopping his vehicle, made a U-turn and then drove back through the crash scene without stopping, and then led law enforcement on a police chase, including another U-turn. Further, it is alleged that Brown-Palmer had his three-year-old child in the back seat of his vehicle at the time of these events.

On September 18, 2024, Brown-Palmer was indicted on one count of Aggravated

Manslaughter (1st degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-4A(2); two counts of Reckless Death by Auto/Vehicular Homicide (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A; one count of Endangering the Welfare of a Child by Caretaker (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:24-4A(2); and one count of Resisting Arrest/Eluding a Police Officer (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:29-2B.

On October 24, 2024, Brown-Palmer pled guilty to one count of Reckless Death by Auto/Vehicular Homicide (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A. On December 3, 2024, Brown-Palmer was sentenced to seven (7) years of incarceration, with a mandatory three (3) years of special parole supervision upon release, pursuant to the No Early Release Act. Further, Brown-Palmer's driving privileges were suspended for five (5) years, and he was ordered to have no contact with the victim's family.

On October 29, 2024, OSP notified the Board that, as a result of his conviction for Reckless Death by Auto/Vehicular Homicide (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A, Brown-Palmer is permanently disqualified from continued employment with any school or institution under the supervision of the Department of Education.

Upon review of the above information, the Board voted at its meeting of January 22, 2026, to issue Brown-Palmer an Order to Show Cause as to why the certificates he holds should not be revoked. On January 23, 2026, the Board sent Brown-Palmer the Order to Show Cause by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested. The Order provided that Brown-Palmer had thirty (30) days to respond pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(b). The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Brown-Palmer did not file a response.

On March 30, 2026, the Board sent a second notice to Brown-Palmer, providing him with

an additional fifteen (15) days to respond. The certified mail copy was signed and returned, and the regular mail copy was not returned. Again, Brown-Palmer did not file a response.

Thereafter, pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(e), the Board sent Brown-Palmer a hearing notice by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, on April 29, 2026. The notice explained that because no answer was filed, there appeared to be no dispute as to material facts in this matter. Thus, Brown-Palmer was offered an opportunity to submit written arguments on the issue of whether the conduct addressed in the Order to Show Cause constituted conduct unbecoming a certificate holder, as well as arguments with regard to the appropriate sanction in the event that the Board found just cause to take action against his certificates. Brown-Palmer was also offered the opportunity to appear before the Board to provide testimony on the sanction issue. The certified mail copy was marked “Delivered, Left with Individual,” and the regular mail copy was not returned. Bauer did not file a response or request to appear before the Board.

The Board has the authority to “issue appropriate certificates to teach or to administer,” and “may revoke the same under rules and regulations prescribed by the State board.” *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38; *see also N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-3.2 and -4.4; *Morison v. Willingboro Bd. of Educ.*, 478 N.J. Super. 229 (App. Div. 2024), *cert. denied* 258 N.J. 143 (July 11, 2024). The Board may take action against a certificate holder on the basis of “demonstrated inefficiency, incapacity, conduct unbecoming a teacher, or other just cause.” *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.4(a); *see also Morison*, 478 N.J. Super. at 246, 248 (explaining the Board is responsible for protecting schoolchildren from improper teacher conduct and may suspend or revoke an educator’s continued ability to serve as a teacher at any public school based on unbecoming conduct).

Because Brown-Palmer failed to respond to the Order to Show Cause, the allegations are deemed admitted. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(c). Consequently, at its meeting of August 7, 2026, the Board considered only the allegations in the January 22, 2026, Order to Show Cause and the information received from the OSP, OLAAC, SCPO and EPD. Because the allegations were deemed admitted, the Board concluded that no material facts related to Brown-Palmer's offenses were in dispute. And because no material facts related to Brown-Palmer's conduct were in dispute, the Board determined that summary decision was appropriate in this matter. *N.J.A.C.* 6A:9B-4.6(h).

The threshold issue before the Board in this matter is whether Brown-Palmer's actions here constitute conduct unbecoming a certificate holder or other just cause. Based on the undisputed facts in this matter, the Board finds that Brown-Palmer engaged in conduct unbecoming of an educator. Unbecoming conduct is defined as "conduct 'which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the [department]' or 'has a tendency to destroy public respect for [government] employees and confidence in the operation of [public] services.'" *Bound Brook Bd. of Educ. v. Ciripompa*, 228 N.J. 4, 13 (2017) (quoting *In re Young*, 202 N.J. 50, 66 (2010) (citing *Karins v. Atl. City*, 152 N.J. 532, 554 (1998))). "[A] finding of unbecoming conduct 'need not be predicated upon the violation of any particular rule or regulation, but may be based merely upon the violation of the implicit standard of good behavior which devolves upon one who stands in the public eye as an upholder of that which is morally and legal correct.'" *Id.* at 13-14 (quoting *Karins*, 152 N.J. at 555). "It focuses on the morale, efficiency, and public perception of an entity, and how those concerns are harmed by allowing teachers to behave inappropriately while holding public

employment.” *Id.* at 14. “The touchstone of the determination lies in the certificate holder’s ‘fitness to discharge the duties and functions of one’s office or position.’” *Young*, 202 N.J. at 66 (quoting *In re Grossman*, 127 N.J. Super. 13, 29 (App. Div. 1974)).

Here, the Board finds that Brown-Palmer’s undisputed conduct of driving while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol with his three-year-old child in the vehicle, striking and killing a bicyclist, fleeing the scene of the crash, and leading law enforcement on a police chase violates the implicit standard of good behavior expected of public school teachers. Further, in enacting the Criminal History Review statute, *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1 *et seq.*, the Legislature sought to protect public school pupils from contact with individuals whom it deemed to be a danger. The strong legislative policy statement is also in accord with the Commissioner’s long-standing belief that teachers must serve as role models for their students. OSP determined that Brown-Palmer’s conviction Reckless Death by Auto/Vehicular Homicide (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A, disqualifies him from public school employment. *See N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-7.1(c)(2) and (d). Thus, the Board finds that Brown-Palmer engaged in conduct unbecoming an educator and provides the basis for the Board’s finding.

Having found that Brown-Palmer engaged in unbecoming conduct, the Board must now determine the appropriate penalty to be applied. In doing so, the Board considers the “nature and gravity of the offenses under all the circumstances involved, any evidence as to provocation, extenuation or aggravation,” and any “harm or injurious effect” on the maintenance of discipline and the proper administration of the school system. *In re Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. 404, 422 (App. Div. 1967). Central to this evaluation is the understanding that “[t]eachers ... are professional

employees to whom the people have entrusted the care and custody of ... school children. This heavy duty requires a degree of self-restraint and controlled behavior rarely requisite to other types of employment.” *IMO Tenure of Sammons*, 1972 *S.L.D.* 302, 321 (Comm’r. Decision, June 12, 1972). Fitness to teach depends on a broad range of factors, including the teacher’s impact and effect upon the students, because a “teacher works in a sensitive area in a schoolroom” and “shapes the attitude of young minds toward the society in which they live.” *Grossman*, 127 N.J. at 30 (*quoting Adler v. Bd. of Educ. of City of New York*, 342 U.S. 485 (1952)). Importantly, unfitness to hold a position in a school system may be shown by one incident if sufficiently flagrant. *Fulcomer*, 93 N.J. Super. at 421; *Redcay v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 130 *N.J.L.* 369, 371 (1943), *aff’d*, 131 *N.J.L.* 326 (E & A 1944).

In this instance, the Board concludes that the appropriate response to Brown-Palmer’s breach in conduct of an educator is revocation of his certificate. Brown-Palmer’s conduct of driving while impaired with his young child in the vehicle and striking and killing a bicyclist is not conduct of a role model for children. Nor is his conduct of fleeing the scene of the crash and leading law enforcement on a police chase, which carries great risk to both law enforcement and members of the public. Rather, his conduct demonstrates he is unfit to discharge the duties and functions as a public-school teacher, and demonstrates strong evidence that revocation is appropriate. Allowing him to maintain certification to teach in a public school would have a negative impact on the proper administration of the school system. Further, the record established that, as a result of his conviction Reckless Death by Auto/Vehicular Homicide (2nd degree), *N.J.S.A.* 2C:11-5A, Brown-Palmer is disqualified from public school employment. An educator

who is not qualified for public school employment should not be able to hold himself out as a public educator. Thus, revocation of his certificates is the appropriate response in this matter.

Accordingly, on August 7, 2026, the Board voted to revoke Brown-Palmer's certificates. On this 18th day of September 2026, the Board voted to adopt its formal written decision, and it is therefore ORDERED that Deandra L. Brown-Palmer's Instructional Substitute credential is hereby REVOKED, effective immediately. It is further ORDERED that Brown-Palmer return his paper certificate, if issued, to the Secretary of the State Board of Examiners, Office of Certification and Induction, P.O. Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500 within 30 days of the mailing date of this decision.



Kimberly A. Gatti, Acting Secretary
State Board of Examiners

Date of Mailing:
By Certified and Regular mail

Appeals may be made to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:6-38.4 and *N.J.A.C.* 6A:4-1.3.